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Italian People's Garden Promotes Healthy Eating Abroad

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CSSF Activity Report

Approved By:

James Dever

Prepared By:

Dana Biasetti

Report Highlights:

The U.S. Ambassador to Italy recently inaugurated the latest international "People's Garden," as part of USDA's initiative to teach people worldwide how to nurture, maintain, and protect a healthy environment. The FAS Rome office was the driving force behind the project organizing a design competition with an Italian Agronomist high school. Among other objectives, the project fostered youth participation in the fight against global food insecurity and created a link between the U.S. government and Italian institutions.

General Information:

Italian People's Garden at Villa Taverna Promotes Eating Abroad

There is no question that Italy is one of the most popular vacation destinations in the world and is renowned for its delicious food and beautiful scenery. Farms and gardens form an important part of the Italian landscape, delighting residents and tourists alike. The U.S. Ambassador to Italy recently inaugurated the latest international "People's Garden," as part of the USDA's initiative to teach people worldwide how to nurture, maintain, and protect a healthy environment.



Mrs. Rose Thorne assists the students in planting seedlings in the "Villa Taverna People's Garden - Orto."

On April 8, 2011, the U.S. Ambassador to Italy David H. Thorne and his wife Rose inaugurated "the Villa Taverna People's Orto" ('Orto' is Italian for vegetable garden), located on the grounds of the Ambassador's official residence, Villa Taverna, in Rome. The Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) Rome office was the driving force behind the planning, design, organization, and implementation of the Orto project. The FAS/Rome office organized and launched a design competition with an Italian Agronomist high school "Istituto Tecnico Agrario Statale Giuseppe Garibaldi," with the mentorship of the Rome Order of Doctors in Agronomy and Forestry. Among other objectives, the project helped foster youth participation in the fight against global food insecurity, creating a link between the U.S. government and Italian institutions. Ambassador and Mrs. Thorne reviewed and approved the student's designs. The resulting Villa Taverna People's Garden Orto highlights the best features of each project, while also including Italian indigenous species in accordance with the biodiversity program.

The People's Garden Orto project provided the Ambassador and Mrs. Thorne the opportunity to highlight the importance of healthy eating habits at a time when obesity and diabetes have become an important health concern in both the United States and Italy. Like Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's "People's Garden" and Michele Obama's White House garden in Washington, DC, the Villa Taverna People's Garden Orto is a perfect example of how vegetable gardening is not only enjoyable but also an important source of healthy fruits and vegetables that can be consumed at home, sold to raise money, or donated to the needy. By involving Italian students, the Orto was instrumental in teaching students the

importance of sustainable production, environmental stewardship, and healthy/responsible consumption patterns. The Villa Taverna People's Garden Orto will serve as a kitchen garden year-round to provide seasonal produce for the Ambassador and his guests.



Ambassador and Mrs. Thorne planting the “Villa Taverna People’s Garden - Orto” and awarding the students for their projects.

Thanks to the Italian People's Garden Orto garden, FAS Rome generated an unprecedented amount of press coverage in both Italian and international, while USDA Public Affairs and the State Department specifically created Blogs on their websites portraying the Villa Taverna Orto.



U.S. Ambassador to Italy David H. Thorne and his wife Rose, center, join local high school students to inaugurate the “Villa Taverna People’s Garden Orto.”

Post used CSSF Funds to cover the costs of supplies, plants, seeds, and other expenses associated with the creation of the Italian People's Garden Orto. Total expense - \$625.71.